

A Guide for Teachers

December 2012

Chattanooga
YOUTH THEATRE
Centre

We're Live

Annie

Book by Thomas Meehan Music by Charles Strouse Lyrics by Martin Charnin

Directed by A. Maria Chattin-Carter

Musical Direction by Andrew Chauncey

Costume and Scenery Design by Scott Dunlap

Co-producers Steve and Amy Meller, Michael Ingram & Lori Conley
Vulcan Materials Company, Markel and Major, The Van Valkenburg Family



allied arts

the arts 
changing lives!

TENNESSEE ARTS COMMISSION

The Cast

Annie.....Emmy McKenzie

Warbucks.....Scott Shaw

Grace Farrell.....Jennifer Major

Orphans

Molly.....Aliyah Mastin

Kate.....Kara Mullins

Tessie.....Lilli Narramore

Pepper.....Cayci Holt

July.....Chapin Montague

Duffy.....Emma Flanagan

Mazy.....Zoe Major

Rose.....Emma Bayer

Daisy.....Maggie Meller

Tuesday.....Aubrey Floyd

Miss Hannigan.....Scott Dunlap

Rooster.....Thaddeus Taylor

Lily.....Laura Holland

FDR.....William Galloway

Ensemble: Beth McClary, Annie Collins, Marcia Parks,
Madison Smith, Mitch Collins, Branden Schwartz, Erick
Lorinc, Ben Cain, Steve Meller, William Smith

Annie in Performance

Annie was the brainchild of Martin Charnin, who was the lyricist and director of the original production. Charnin teamed with composer Charles Strouse and librettist Thomas Meehan to create a musical based on the much loved character of the newspaper comic strip. It took fourteen months to write and another year and a half years to make it to the stage. Annie had its out-of-town try out at the Goodspeed Opera House in Connecticut where it was seen by the successful producer Mike Nichols, who brought it to Broadway. The show opened on Broadway on April 21, 1977 where it quickly gained a following. In 1982 it was made into a movie with Aileen Quinn as Annie, Albert Finney as Daddy Warbucks, Carol Burnett as Miss Hannigan, Time Curry as Rooster Hannigan, and Bernadette Peters as Lily.

Annie ran on Broadway until 1983 (2377 performances) and has been revived twice since then. It won the Tony award for best musical in 1977. There have been several successful touring productions and 27 major foreign productions. It is estimated that the show is produced in the United States 700 to 900 times every year.



Andrea McArdle, Reid Shelton and Sandy from the original production

Production Numbers in *Annie*



Poster for the 1983 Movie

Maybe
It's a Hard Knock Life
Tomorrow
Little Girls
I Think I'm Going to Like It Here
N.Y.C
Easy Street
You Won't be an Orphan for Long
You're Never Fully Dressed Without a Smile
I Don't Need Anything But You
A New Deal for Christmas

Read it in the Funny Papers

The idea of telling stories through a series of pictures is as old as cave drawings. The idea of putting comic drawings in newspapers dates back to the 18th century. In our country's colonial period, editorial cartoons were used to stir the sentiment of the public in favor, or against, our separation from England.

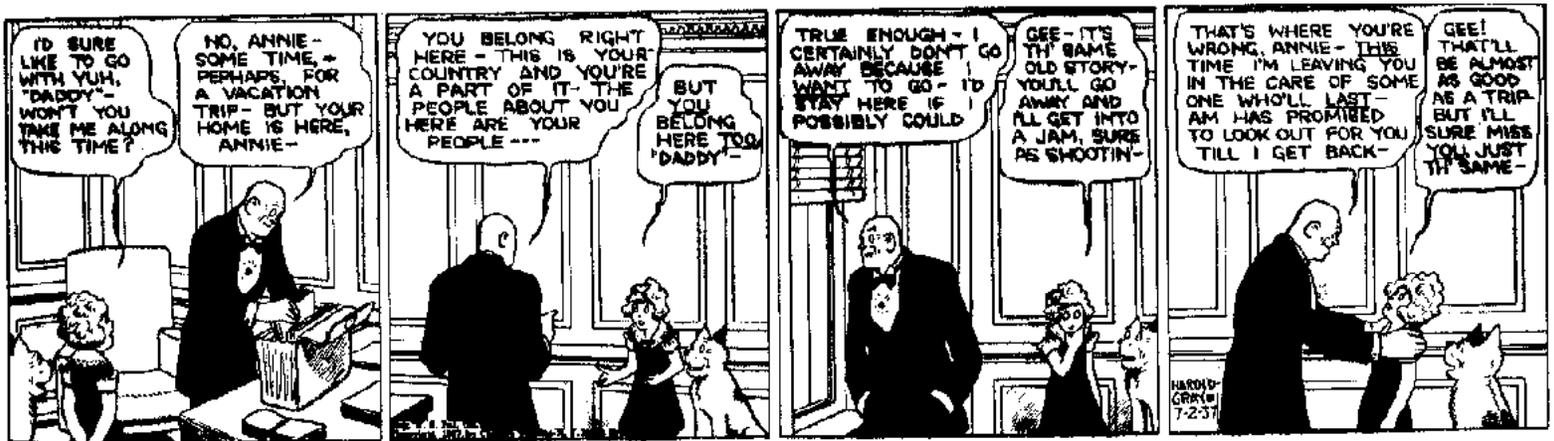
The first newspaper comic strip, consisting of a series of panels depicting the continuing adventures of one or more characters, dates to the late 19th century. The first is credited to be "The Yellow Kid," a small boy with a bald head who hung out in a place called "Hogan's Alley," which was also the original name of the strip. The fact that he hung out in an alley and his head was shaved (a common remedy for lice among the poor) suggests a strip about the less fortunate children in our society. Though for entertainment, education and social commentary seem to be common themes with all newspaper comics.



Some of the conventions that are common to our understanding of comics first appeared at the turn of the twentieth century, such as dialogue balloons, sawing wood to denote someone sleeping and swirling stars to represent a knock on the head. Early comic strip successes include "Krazy Kat," "Mutt and Jeff," and "Gasoline Alley." Little Orphan Annie came along in 1924

It is part of the legend that Annie's creator Harold Gray had first drawn a little orphan boy and named him "Little Orphan Otto." The newspaper publisher thought the boy looked like a girl so he suggested putting a skirt on him. Gray, looking to sell his creation obliged and "Little Orphan Annie" was born. It is unclear how much the name was influenced by the James Whitcomb Riley poem "Little Orphant Annie."

At first, Annie was an orphan girl who, by her pluck and the kindness of strangers, was able to help herself and others survive. Infused with Gray's own conservative philosophy that all anyone needed was a fair chance to do well, Little Orphan Annie



asked for no charity. In an early edition, she is brought home by Mrs. Warbucks who does this on "a trial basis," saying it is "charity." Oliver Warbucks, upon hearing this says, "Annie doesn't need charity- just give her an even break and she'll do the rest." Throughout their relationship, Oliver Warbucks never adopted Annie (she would have lost the title "Little Orphan"). He would often leave her for business trips in the hands of someone who would not, or could not take care of her. It would then be up to Annie to take care of herself.

By the late thirties, as war loomed in the world, Annie traded helping drowning boys and widows for saving the country. This was usually against Nazi agents, smugglers and U-boats, with the aid of her Junior commandos. This slant towards international suspense would continue to serve as storylines for Annie even through the death of creator Harold Gray in 1968. The strip continued along through the work of his assistant until 1979. It received a shot in the arm in 1977 with the production of the Broadway musical which has cemented Little Orphan Annie as an American icon.

Who's Who in Annie

Most of the characters we see in the musical do not appear in the comic strip, yet they are suggestions of the many types of people Little Orphan Annie met in her many adventures. Here is a rundown of the major characters in the play:

Annie - A spunky girl living in the municipal Girls Orphanage. Annie dreams of one day finding her real parents and being rescued by them. In the meantime, she is a thwart to the orphanage's matron, Miss Hannigan.

Miss Hannigan - The matron of the orphanage, she hates girls and orphans especially. She's disillusioned and believes her life would have been so much better without these "little girls."

Grace Farrell - Oliver Warbucks Secretary. She has been given the task of bringing an orphan back to Warbuck's mansion for Christmas. Having just been returned by the police after an attempt to run away, Annie is in Miss Hannigan's office when Grace arrives. Grace takes an instant liking to her and Miss Hannigan reluctantly allows Annie to go.

Oliver Warbucks - Billionaire industrialist with connections everywhere. He opens his home at Christmas time to an orphan. Upon having Annie presented to him, he remarks that orphans are boys. Annie soon endears herself to him and he relents in her staying.

Rooster Hannigan - Miss Hannigan's no-good brother, he's always on the lookout for a way to make a quick, and dishonest buck. He sees an opportunity in Annie's being in Warbuck's care.

Lily St. Regis - Rooster's girlfriend and collaborator in their scam.

The Orphans - Girls who live with Annie at the Orphanage, they range in age from 6 to 13.

Franklin Roosevelt - The President of the United States, he is charmed by Annie's optimism in the future.

Sandy - A dog that Annie befriends when she runs away from the orphanage. They are separated when she is caught by the police.

Questions and Discussion Topics

How is a character different than an real life person?

Character traits are created by actors using the clues given to them by the playwright. What do you know about these characters from what you have seen and heard during the play?

If you had to play one of these characters, what would you do differently than the actors on stage?

Why do characters sing songs in musicals?

Miss Hannigan and Rooster are the villains in the show. Villains are very important to a story because without them, there would be no problems for the heroes to overcome. Think of villains in other stories. What traits do they share? Don't forget the good traits!

A lot of what actors do during the rehearsal process is figure out what the character is thinking during every scene. Given what you know about the characters, what do you suppose Oliver Warbucks thought when he first met Annie? What do you think Annie was thinking?

Themes in Annie



Christmas - *Annie* is a Christmas musical. Music and Christmas seem to go hand-in-hand. Beyond the music, *Annie* is a story about a little girl who is redeemed from her circumstances by the kindness of others. Redemption is a major part of every Christmas story: think *A Christmas Carol*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. Even the story of the Nativity is about the redemption of the world through the birth of a tiny child.

Discussion - If you were to write a story about Christmas what would it be about? Who would the characters be?

Family - Annie's greatest wish is to have her parents find her. In her song "Maybe," she shares a romantic, idyllic view of who her parents are. Most of us don't have the luxury of picking our families but we have a knack of making families out of the people who surround us. Annie may not realize that the other girls in the orphanage are her family. She takes care of them and, in their own way, show great love and loyalty in return. When Annie goes to Oliver Warbuck's home, she finds a new kind of family. Is it a healthier better family? That may be up to individual interpretation.

Discussion - Who do you consider part of your family? Families are created through shared values, experiences and loyalties. What kinds of things do you share with your family? Do you have more than one family? If so, how are they different from one another?

Wealth - The play *Annie* takes place during the Great Depression. This was a time of incredible financial hardship for many people throughout the world. There have been many parallels drawn between the Great Depression and our current economic problems but it is important to remember that, because of what happened in the 1930s, we have many more safety nets in place than they did, such as unemployment insurance and deposit insurance. It is hard for most people to grasp the kind of poverty we saw during that time. In some respects, Annie was lucky because she was in an orphanage where she was fed, clothed and housed, all be it meagerly. Oliver Warbucks, on the other hand is very wealthy. Yet despite, or maybe because, of that wealth, he is missing something that Annie has.

Discussion - What kinds of things does Annie do to cope with her circumstances? What do you think Annie has that Oliver Warbucks doesn't? What is the difference in their circumstances at the beginning of the play? What is it that Annie teaches him?

Making a Musical

Like Annie, most musicals are based on an already well-known story. Here is a recipe for making a musical in your classroom:

Step 1

Find a story you like. Keep it short and simple as the more details add the bigger the task of putting it together becomes (Aesop's fables work well).

Step 2

Decide where songs should go and what they should be about. Songs are usually placed in a musicals where the emotion of the story or the characters is expressed best through singing. You don't need to be a composer to do this. Use the tunes from songs your students already know, like "London Bridges, or Jingle Bells. Make new lyrics that fit the tune. Putting new words to a familiar tune is called a "Piggyback song."

Step 3

To make sure there are enough parts for everyone it is sometimes necessary to create a chorus who helps tell the story or makes comments on it (i.e. you can have a chorus of tableware in a retelling of *The Cow Jumped Over the Moon*). You can also animate inanimate objects to create more characters (i.e. making the pitcher a character in the *Crow and The Pitcher*).

Step 4

Choreography is as simple as having your chorus do simple movement in unison. Almost every class has a student who has taken some dance, or fancies themselves a dancer. Assign choreography to them.

Step 5

Practice, practice, practice! Most things look terrible for at least 80% of the process. Keep at it and don't be afraid to change things if they don't help to tell the story.

Step 6

Put together some simple costumes and scenery pieces. You don't have to be elaborate. The costumes, props and scenery are there to help you tell the story and shouldn't overshadow the acting and singing.

Note: If you would like to do this with more than one classroom, each classroom can take on a different short story, do the same story from a different point of view, or you can divide the story into separate acts for each classroom.

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Feb. 1-10

The | Play

30 words in 30 minutes

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This study guide was prepared by Chuck Tuttle

Sources Materials

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